

Kansas Congressional Delegation to President Obama: Come Visit Ft. Leavenworth

Kansas Delegation urges President to see ramifications of Leavenworth as possible site

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, U.S. Senators Pat Roberts and Sam Brownback, and U.S. Representatives Lynn Jenkins, Dennis Moore, Jerry Moran and Todd Tiahrt sent a letter to invite President Obama and his Gitmo task force to Ft. Leavenworth to see firsthand that housing detainees there or using it as the site for the federal trials and military commissions is dangerous for the community and logistically unreasonable.

The Kansas Congressional delegation is united against this idea and cited in the letter to President Obama the total lack of local support for such a proposal and the many security risks it raises for our Kansas communities. Additionally, they urged Obama to visit the existing facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to fully understand what it means to put a facility like Gitmo in the middle of our American communities.

The text of the letter:

“We write today regarding media reports that your Special Interagency Task Force on Detention Disposition views Leavenworth, Kansas as a possible detention facility site for Guantanamo detainees. We find these reports highly disturbing, both because of the lack of local support for such a proposal and the many security problems it raises for our Kansas communities. It is also important to note that no member of our state's congressional delegation has been briefed on Leavenworth's consideration.

“As elected representatives, it is our duty to convey the concern, anger and dismay of Leavenworth's citizens. They worry deeply that while the Military Police at Fort Leavenworth can without a doubt secure a facility from the inside out, they cannot ensure safety from the outside in. Simply put, they worry their schools, hospitals and shopping centers will become symbolic, easy targets for terrorists and terrorist sympathizers. Further, they are concerned that Fort Leavenworth's reputation as the Intellectual Center of the Army will be tarnished for the many American and international officers that attend the school. At a time when your Administration is looking to reach out to other nations, it seems counterintuitive to destroy a century old program built around precisely that concept. Lastly, the Military Police themselves will tell you that the 430 military prisoners in Leavenworth today should not be moved to our civilian prison system and that Fort Leavenworth is the only remaining facility in the United States Armed Forces capable of housing them.

“It is in the best interest of all involved to communicate with each other directly regarding this issue. As such, we would like to formally invite you and your task force members to visit Leavenworth, Kansas. During recent attempts to elicit information from your Administration, it has become very clear that high level officials involved in this decision have not seen Fort Leavenworth's facilities or the community surrounding them.

“We would also encourage you to visit the Guantanamo Bay Detention Facility, as it has come to our attention that you have not previously visited this site. We implore you to go

personally, and to give great pause to what it would mean for a community like Leavenworth, Kansas to accept something similar. Thank you in advance for your consideration."

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